

Stockham Valves & Fittings

Birmingham Industrial League

Even though American Cast Iron and Pipe (ACIPCO) dominated the Birmingham Industrial League up until the late 1940's, they were not without competition. From the very beginnings of industrial league baseball in Birmingham, Stockham Valves and Fittings were the arch rival and main competition year in and year out for ACIPCO.

Games between Stockham and ACIPCO were legendary and always drew huge crowds at Sloss Field and Rickwood Field. Often the outcome of championship of the "league" hinged on how these two teams did against each other.

Over a sixteen (16) year period from 1928 through 1943, ACIPCO only lost the "league" championship two times and that was to Stockham in 1937 and 1938. In order to defeat ACIPCO, Stockham brought ace pitcher "Mute" Banks from Atlanta to lead them to victory.

One of the main stays of the Stockham team during the 1930's and 1940's was Willie C. Young who was a one armed pitcher and later coach of the team. Young started pitching for Stockham in 1935 and his tenure with the team lasted over twenty years.

Johnnie Cowan Brings Championship Baseball Back to Stockham

Johnnie Cowan grew up playing baseball in the Birmingham Industrial League before he broke in with the Birmingham Black Barons in 1934. Cowan was an infielder in the Negro Leagues from 1934 to 1949 with the Birmingham Black Barons, Cleveland Buckeyes, Cuban Stars (East), Detroit Stars and Memphis Red Sox. His last season in professional baseball was in 1950 when he played for the Winnipeg Elmwood Giants of the Mandak League.

After he retired from professional baseball he returned home to Birmingham and went to work at Stockham Valves and Fittings Company. With his professional baseball background he was immediately recruited to play on the company baseball team in 1951. In 1953 he became the player-manager of the team and led them to championships in 1954, 1955 and 1958.

Stockham also won the Birmingham Industrial League championship in 1957 with a record of 14-4 (.778).

Stockham Valves & Fittings Dominates the League

Birmingham Y.M.C.A. Industrial League Championship (1965)

In 1965 Lorenzo Piper Davis, manager of Stockham Valve and Fitting's baseball team, recruited an entire roster of former Negro American League players to play for the Stockham team in the Birmingham Industrial League.

The team's starting line-up for the 1965 season included:

Player	Negro League Team	Position
James "Sap" Ivory	Birmingham Black Barons	1B
Melvin Stoves	No Negro League Career	2B
Jessie Bass	Birmingham Black Barons	SS
Henry Elmore	Philadelphia Stars	3B
Walter Stoves	Birmingham Black Barons	C
Clifford DuBose	Memphis Red Sox	OF
Jessie Mitchell	Kansas City Monarchs	OF
Raymond Haggins	Memphis Red Sox	OF
Pete Mumpford	Kansas City Monarchs	P

At the end of the 1965 season, Stockham was awarded the Birmingham Industrial Championship Trophy which is seen in this exhibit. Stockham dominated the Industrial League and semipro baseball in the Birmingham area for the next 10 plus years.

From 1965 through the 1979 season, Stockham Valves and Fittings won at least eleven Birmingham Industrial League titles.

**Stockham Valves and Fittings
Championship Teams**

Years

1937	1972
1938	1973
1954	1974
1955	1975
1957	1977
1965	1978
1966	1979
1967	
1968	

Note: This list is not considered to be complete.

Stockham's

Leading Hitters in the 1960's

Player	1963	1964	1965	1967	1968	1969
Jesse Bass *	-	-	.370	-	-	-
Lorenzo Davis *	-	.340	-	1.000	-	-
Clifford DuBose*	-	.424	.390	.354	.196	-
Henry Elmore *	.400	.270	.500	.418	.380	.385
Ernest Fann *	-	-	-	.308	.285	-
Clinton Forge *	-	-	-	-	.314	.285
Ray Haggins *	-	-	.360	-	-	-
Charlie Harris	.390	.363	.385	.348	-	-
Henry Howell *	.350	-	-	-	-	-
Alphonse Holt *	-	-	-	.402	.360	.425
James Ivory *	.418	.430	.408	.400	.372	.390
Jessie Mitchell *	-	-	.396	.428	-	-
George Nichols	-	-	-	.384	.424	-
Joe Nunn	-	-	.380	.348	-	-
Calvin Orange	.368	.230	.290	.378	.386	.388
Ronnie Smith	.433	.336	-	-	-	-
Walter Stoves *	.365	.310	.404	.390	.324	-

Note: Twelve (12) of the top seventeen (17) hitters for Stockham Valves and Fittings during the 1960's were all former Negro League players